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## Musings

By John Cutler

□The Lord's Prayer contains 56 words; the Gettysburg Address, 266; the Ten Commandments, 297; the Declaration of Independence, 300. A recent U.S. Government order setting the price of cabbage, 26,911.

□Count Tolstoy said he would have given up his entire fame, fortune and career if there had been one woman who worried when he came home late for dinner. That, of course, was before Women's Lib.

□One disenchanted evening, when I had insomnia, I was comforted by the words of Nietzsche: "Sleep is a symptom of the will to fail."

□Poetry that creates a picture: "When, as in silks my Julia goes, the liquefaction of her clothes..."

□Corot painted only 2,000 portraits, but more than 3,000 are on sale.

□Gamblers Anonymous include high rollers who say they can't afford to break even.

□The way taxes are rising maybe we should revive the slogan: "God help the rich, the poor can beg."

□To illustrate the Biblical prediction that eventually the lion and lamb shall lie down together, barnum put a lion and lamb in a cage. He was asked how the experiment was working. "Oh, fairly well. I am going to make it a permanent feature if the supply of lambs holds out."

## Valentine's! What Does It Mean?

This being Valentine's season and all, my mind meanders to the meaning of the day. Pictures of little Cupid and his quiver full of arrows are splattered around stores, reminding us of our responsibilities to our sweethearts.

We whip out our "roses are red," verses and pass them along. But though Valentine's Day offers stimulus to be thoughtful to those we love, it really doesn't carry the clout it used to before modern ways and conveniences.

One ingredient of romance has to be mystery. And there's little enigma in relationships today. We know too much, too soon.

Time was, young love bloomed on opposite ends of a see saw during recess. Gallant youths would pay court to a demure little darlin' at a barn

dance. And they even provided bundling boards on cold winter evenings. You remember hearing about those. They sounded tantalizing.

But these days the female of the species is no longer required to drop her hankie to catch the eye of a handsome swain. And it's all because of modern conveniences. We've got the drive-in movies, the car to get there and the telephone to make prior arrangements. Oh, dear.

Parents have used their own ploys to limit contact among the young, to restrain the budding of youthful love until we're ready to sanction it, when they're about 45 and self-supporting.

One time when we attended a drive-in picture show with a car full of children, we parked behind a car that resembled a Norman Rockwell scene. Apparently a father, the boy's we decided, had condescended to take his son and girl friend to the movie.

Dad sat in front, crunched behind the steering wheel so no one would see him. In the back sat the couple, who started the movie on opposite ends of the seat. As the movie progressed, they carefully moved closer and during the good part of the show, he managed to sneak his arm around her. We couldn't be sure if all three found the evening satisfactory, but it certainly fore-stalled cupid's full force, namely a driver's license. In fact that was probably the last time Dad got to use the car for a few years on a Saturday night.

Still the primary force that enables young love to bloom is the fault of Alexander Graham Bell.

In the olden days girls weren't allowed to call boys. Oh, we were willing, even eager. But there was only one telephone per household and it was nearly impossible to come up with a reason to call that would pass parental supervision. Besides, they'd have heard the whole conversation, a damper to any blooming relationship.

Today it's different. We've been liberated, remember, and can dial as well as a man, certainly sooner biologically. And mothers have rallied to the forefront to handle such calls when they come. It's a challenge with 13 year olds, though. There's not a distinct voice difference between sexes and Mother may not be keen to a girl's voice when she calls.

Some women have resorted to subtleties. For example, if the boy's not home, she'll tell the young lady on the other end of the line that he's out "playing." The implication is the little fellow is in the back yard with his Tonka trucks in the sand box. The conclusion is meant to be that he's still in line for babysitters rather than girl friends...It doesn't always work.

When calls go through, the recipients immediately go to a different telephone so they won't be heard. Or they shut themselves in bathrooms, kitchen closets, wherever the line will reach to avoid eavesdropping. Silly, really. We'd never interfere; we'd be helpful.

The only mystery in young love these days is for the parents. They'd like to know who called, what she looks like and what her hobbies are. Mothers are unsettled when they're only told the girl looks like one of Charlie's Angels.

My sister has teenage twin daughters who'll be 14 next month. She says she doesn't allow her girls to call boys when she can hear them. She's a realist. She knows she doesn't have time to lurk under their beds waiting for the dialing to start or to check the dialing digit to see if it's inflamed from overuse. And she also realizes the phone will be tied up by girls calling her son. It works out well.

I'm relieved they still have Valentine's Day, an opportunity for us gals to give and get little candies with catchy phrases and exchange those Snoopy cards.

Still young girls don't know what they're missing. Someone did away with May basket day. That's when we really had license. You could hang a basket on a door knob, ring the bell. And he'd have to catch you and kiss you. The last May basket I delivered was 22 years ago to a person who now lives in my house as Lord and Master, well as breadwinner anyway.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe it was Alfred Lord Tennyson who said, "In the spring a young man's fancy, lightly turns to thoughts of love."

Well-spoken, Alfred. But the thing is we girls never wait till spring when someone good comes along in the winter. Happy Valentine's week.

## PATCHES

By Lois Martin

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